

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY ROME PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY DUBLIN PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG PRIORITY

S E C R E T STATE 204810

EXDIS

FOLLOWING TELEGRAM FROM THE HAGUE DATED AUGUST 26, 1975 SENT
SECSTATE WASHDC INFO LONDON, LISBON, PARIS, EC BRUSSELS, NATO
IS REPEATED TO YOU: QUOTE

S E C R E T THE HAGUE 4300

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, SREF, EAID, PO, FR, N, GW, AO, UK
SUBJECT: PORTUGUESE POLITICAL CRISIS AND ALLIED DEMARCHES

REF: STATE 202520

1. IN VIEW OF CHARACTER AND URGENCY OF INSTRUCTIONS REFTEL
I REQUESTED APPOINTMENT WITH FOREIGN MINISTER VAN DER STOEL
WHO AGREED TO RECEIVE ME ON VERY SHORT NOTICE EARLY THIS
AFTERNOON DESPITE FULL SCHEDULE RESULTING FROM ONGOING TWO-
DAY ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF SOME 60 DUTCH CHIEFS OF MISSION,

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INCLUDING DUTCH AMBASSADOR TO LISBON.

2. AFTER HEARING MY PRESENTATION FOREIGN MINISTER SAID THAT GON WAS KEENLY AWARE OF PRESENT CRITICAL SITUATION AND HAD HOPED OVER PAST WEEKEND FOR SOME CONSTRUCTIVE DEVELOPMENTS. HE RECOGNIZED SITUATION WAS PRECARIOUS AND COULD STILL CHANGE MOMENTARILY. IN HIS JUDGMENT EC-9 JULY DECISION CONDITIONING AID FOR PORTUGAL ON DEMOCRATIC PLURALISM CONSTITUTED CONTINUING SIGNIFICANT FACTOR. HE BELIEVED THAT ANY NEW ACTION WITH LISBON WOULD PROBABLY BE MOST EFFECTIVE IF AGAIN IT REPRESENTED UNANIMOUS POSITION OF EC-9. FOR THIS REASON HE EXPRESSED DOUBT THAT HIS GOVERNMENT WOULD WISH TO TAKE INDEPENDENT INITIATIVE IN PRESENT SITUATION, THOUGH HE WOULD CERTAINLY DISCUSS THIS POSSIBILITY WITH HIS CABINET COLLEAGUES ON BASIS OF US APPROACH. AT THE SAME TIME HE GAVE ME DISTINCT IMPRESSION THAT DUTCH WOULD PROBABLY PREFER IN ANY CASE TO CONSULT EC-9 COLLEAGUES, INCLUDING ITALIANS AS EC-9 PRESIDENT, BEFORE TAKING ACTION. FOR THIS REASON I REPEATED OUR ESTIMATE OF THE URGENCY OF PRESENT SITUATION, WHICH HE AGAIN ACCEPTED.

3. FOREIGN MINISTER NOTED THAT PRIME MINISTER DEN UYL AND HE, AS WELL AS FRG PM SCHMIDT AND SWEDISH PM PALME, HAD ALL MET SEPARATELY WITH PORTUGUESE PRESIDENT COSTA GOMES AT HELSINKI. ALL HAD EMERGED WITH DISTINCT IMPRESSION THAT PORTUGUESE PRESIDENT WAS WEAK, VACILLATING INDIVIDUAL WHO WAS IN NO SENSE HIS OWN MASTER. HELSINKI CONVERSATIONS HAD TAKEN PLACE IN ALL THREE INSTANCES IN PRESENCE OF OTHER PORTUGUESE, WHOSE FUNCTION SEEMED TO BE BOTH TO INSURE THAT PRESIDENT DID NOT ACT INDEPENDENTLY AND TO BE IN POSITION TO REPORT BACK TO OTHERS IN LISBON PRECISE TERMS OF CONVERSATIONS.

4. VAN DER STOEL EMPHASIZED THAT DUTCH AMBASSADOR TO PORTUGAL WAS NOW IN THE HAGUE FOR AMBASSADORIAL CONFERENCE AND WOULD BE HERE AT LEAST THROUGH TOMORROW. WHILE HE LEFT OPEN POSSIBILITY THAT AMBASSADOR MIGHT RETURN TO LISBON LATER THIS WEEK, THIS WAS NOT PRESENT PLAN SINCE AMBASSADOR HAD OTHER COMMITMENTS HERE THIS WEEK. FOREIGN MINISTER CONCLUDED CONVERSATION BY PROMISING TO INFORM ME AS SOON AS POSSIBLE CONCERNING DUTCH RESPONSE TO APPROACH.

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5. ON BASIS THIS CONVERSATION IT APPEARS THAT DUTCH ARE UNLIKELY TO REACT TO US APPROACH WITHOUT CHECKING WITH OTHER MEMBERS OF EC-9. DUTCH MAY ALSO FEEL EVENTS IN LISBON ARE MOVING SO RAPIDLY THAT NEW APPROACH WOULD SERVE NO REAL PURPOSE. AT THE SAME TIME DUTCH INTEREST IN DEMOCRATIC EVOLUTION IN PORTUGAL IS SO STRONG THAT US APPROACH WILL UNDOUBTEDLY STRENGTHEN DISPOSITION TO EXERT MAXIMUM EFFECTIVE INFLUENCE.

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